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Responding to open drug scenes and drug-related crime and public nuisance – towards a partnership approach

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Executive Summary

This report provides an overview of the hearings of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice (hereafter Criminal Justice Platform) between 2004 and 2006. During this period five platforms meetings were convened on the subject of open drug scenes, drug-related crime and the types of responses developed in various countries throughout the European Union and beyond. Presentations were heard covering the experience in over thirty cities. The scale and nature of the problems associated with 'open drug scenes' varies from place to place. However, most countries have acknowledged that the complexity of the problem requires a multi-faceted response developed and implemented in partnership between relevant agencies and stakeholders.

The many diverse structures and processes through which such responses are delivered are described below. The report concludes by identifying some common principles underlying the various partnership schemes and, based on the evidence presented to the Criminal Justice Platform, outlines a number of good practice guidelines for partnership working.

Introduction

The phenomenon of 'open drug scenes' where drug users gather and meet each other, and sometimes buy and consume drugs in public, is not new. The experience of associated problems such as violence between participants in illicit drug markets, street prostitution, public drug-taking, the random disposal of drug related litter and related public nuisance have also got long traditions. In recent times however, we have witnessed a greater level of public concern, debate and analysis of such issues at the national and international levels^{1, 2}. As a consequence, the development of appropriate responses to 'open drug scenes' and related crime, nuisance and health concerns, have become increasingly important aspects of national drug strategies².

We have also witnessed a greater level of debate about the most appropriate way to intervene in and respond to such phenomena. Recognising the complexity of the problems being faced, and motivated by a concern to balance the general welfare of the broader community with the safety and health of drug users, contemporary approaches are seeking new and innovative ways of dealing with these old problems. Strategic thinking, in-depth problem analysis, long-term planning and partnership between agencies and stakeholders are characteristic of this new development. This represents a movement away from reactions based primarily on repression and strict law enforcement. Such partnership approaches, often involving collaboration between law enforcement, social and health services and other stakeholders including local communities, have faced their own obstacles and challenges. Nevertheless, there is a growing consensus that partnership working offers the most sustainable method of responding to many drug problems.

Between 2004 and 2006, the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice (hereafter the Criminal Justice Platform) convened five meetings which addressed the issues of open drug scenes, drug-related crime and which received a number of presentations as to how such problems were responded to in different cities and countries throughout the European Union and beyond. The meetings addressed the following main themes:

- How drug scenes and drug related nuisance is defined and experienced in different countries.
- A comparative overview of different responses.
- What practical measures could be undertaken to develop partnership working between relevant stakeholders in response to drug problems.
- How obstacles to partnership working could be overcome.
- Identification of good practice in terms of training stakeholders for partnership working.

Presentations were received outlining a range of different experiences of the impact of open drug scenes and related problems. Examples of partnership responses to such phenomena were provided by practitioners from over thirteen cities in eleven countries. Comparative overviews were also presented by Helge Wall³ of the University of Oslo and by Chloé Carpentier of the European Monitoring Centre for Drugs and Drug Addiction⁴.

It is important to recognise that the specific responses to drug-related problems and practical examples of partnership working can vary significantly from country to country. These differences may reflect different cultural, legal and national policy approaches to the drug phenomenon as a whole. Nevertheless, despite these differences, a number of common principles and practices can be identified. The purpose of this report is to provide an overview of the work of the Criminal Justice Platform and, based on the information presented during the five meetings, to identify guidelines for good practice in partnership working¹.

‘Open drug scenes’ and related nuisance behaviour

WAAL suggests that the concept of open drug scenes covers a number of elements:

‘The term is used to describe meeting points where drugs are sold and for places where users get together. It is also used to describe problems of nuisance and public reactions to the scenes and the development of subcultures found to be offensive’³.

Central to the concept is the idea of the public being confronted in their day-to-day lives with open drug dealing and drug use. The genesis and scale of the problem experienced varies from place to place. Wall describes the experience of five European cities: Zurich (Switzerland), Vienna (Austria), Frankfurt (Germany), Amsterdam (Netherlands) and Oslo (Norway). The ‘open drug scenes’ generally emerged in those cities in the late 1960’s and early 1970’s and were, according to Wall, originally associated with ‘young people gathering in parks or as squatters in non-traditional places to meet and live’. While originally cannabis was the main drug associated with such scenes, amphetamines, heroin and, increasingly cocaine, are now common in places. The characteristics of the participants attracted to such scenes can range from alienated youths or drug users with severe health and social problems to established criminals with links to organised crime.

The size of the drug scene can also vary greatly, from small isolated pockets of individuals to scenes with thousands of participants. This can also be affected by the duration of the drug scene and the way in which established drug scenes can exercise a “pull-effect”, attracting drug users or ‘drug tourists’ from other cities or countries. Such drug scenes can also attract people who are not primarily looking for drugs but are engaging in other activities, which can

¹ The information presented below should be regarded as merely illustrative of the many issues raised during the meetings of the Criminal Justice Platform. Throughout the text the reader is referred to specific presentations in order to highlight the point being made. The individual presentations can be obtained in a compilation from the Pompidou Group doc. Ref. P-PG/CJ(2006)4 “Responding to drug markets and drug related public nuisance”.

become associated with the drug scene, such as prostitution. Table 1 provides a list of some of the principle reported problems and activities associated with 'open drug scenes'.

Table 1: Reported problems associated with European 'Open drug scenes'

| |
|--|
| Drug-related mortality |
| Involvement of organised crime groups |
| Violence and gang turf wars |
| Drug-related petty crime in surrounding vicinity |
| Prostitution |
| Visible drug intoxication |
| Visible drug use and injecting |
| The discarding of needles and other drug paraphernalia |
| Drug tourism |
| Emergence of houses where drugs are sold and/or used – 'Crack' houses |
| Development of a drug market for many substances |
| Open drug scenes can make it difficult for drug users to address their addiction due to visible temptation |
| Creation of 'no-go' areas for local residents due to fear |
| Contribution to stigmatisation of local community |
| Street homelessness |
| Noise pollution |
| Attraction of young people to the drug scene |
| Interference with traffic on roads adjacent to the drug scene |

From reaction to partnership

The way in which different societies react to 'open drug scenes' shows considerable variation and this can reflect different societal attitudes and levels of tolerance in relation to drug users, drug use and associated behaviours. Wall makes a general distinction between two responses, described as the 'restrictive' response and the 'liberal' response³. On the one hand, the 'restrictive or repressive response' is influenced, he suggests, by a perception of drug use as a disease which must be prevented from spreading and the drug user as a deviant engaging in behaviours 'in open defiance of society's rules and norms' and in contravention of accepted order. In this context the US concept of a 'war on drugs' is seen as influential in encouraging attempts to abolish drug scenes with repressive measure. The other approach is described as 'a liberal or humanistic' approach where the drug user is perceived as a victim of alienation and/or stigmatisation within an excessively restrictive political order. Central to the latter approach is a focus on the sufferings and illnesses of the drug user in the open drug scene or in prison. This approach gained influence, Wall suggests, with the emergence of HIV-related illnesses.

Many of the practical examples of partnership presented to the Criminal Justice Platform combine elements both of tolerance and repression in response to 'open drug scenes' and therefore they do not lend themselves to simple categorisation as either repressive or liberal. This can be as a result of the need to find, within a particular local context, a compromise between pressure groups. At given times a repressive approach can dominate the response. For example, where 'open drug scenes' expand to unmanageable proportions or when related crime and nuisance levels attract media attention and/or lead to demands from local residents, business interest groups or politicians for swift action.

Opposition of this nature can lead to the mobilisation of local residents' groups or intensive policing aimed at removing the 'open drug scene'. However, the experience in many countries is that such action, while understandable from the perspective of the local pressure group perhaps, is a short-term response which generally only serves to displace the drug scene to a different residential location, or to a public place such as a train station. Furthermore, the drug scene is often driven underground and, while the nuisance concerns of the local public may have been addressed, the health predicament of drug users can deteriorate as they become invisible and inaccessible to harm reduction measures, drug treatment and social and health services. In some experiences, the repression and dispersal of 'open drug scenes' has been associated with increases in drug-related deaths and other drug-related harms.

Also, the removal of open drug markets through intensive law enforcement can lead to adaptation by drug dealers and the development of more closed markets, based in local houses, facilitated by mobile phones for example and increasingly impenetrable to police or other services.

The growing acknowledgement of the limitations of responses based exclusively on repression and law enforcement, have been an important catalyst for the emergence of more multi-faceted approaches. Inherent in this new approach, there is an acknowledgement that effective strategies to address drug use, 'open drug scenes' and drug-related public nuisance need to involve a combination of law enforcement and health and social care. In some countries we have seen a shift from 'zero tolerance' to 'conditional tolerance' of open drug use, the primary condition being securing an acceptable balance between such individual behaviour and the right of the general public to be free from fear and intimidation in their enjoyment of public space. While levels of tolerance vary from place to place, there is a growing awareness that the complexity of the problems being encountered does not lend itself to simple solutions.

The realism that simple repression is not the answer has created challenges for all the stakeholders involved, including local communities. Policing authorities have had to acknowledge that their response must move beyond strict law enforcement and towards more problem-oriented policing. On the other hand, social care personnel are also challenged to accept that there is a role for law enforcement, particularly in terms of addressing the concerns of the wider public with regard to drug-related nuisance. For local residents, accepting the establishment of drug treatment facilities close to their homes has been a contentious issue. Addressing and overcoming community fears or tackling traditional professional and cultural assumptions by agency personnel form an important component of the overall challenge of partnership working. The ability to overcome such challenges is dependent upon a range of factors. Among the most important of these is the infrastructure of partnership; that is the coordinating, decision-making and communication systems agreed by the various stakeholders to facilitate their collaboration.

Partnership structures and processes

Partnership arrangements can be highly structured and established in law or they can evolve in an informal way in response to a specific situation or problem. In the United Kingdom, the establishment of Drug and Alcohol Action teams and Crime Reduction Partnerships is a major component of government drug policy. In the United Kingdom, the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998 provides a statutory framework for the development of partnerships^{5, 6, 7}. Police and local authorities are responsible jointly for the development and implementation of a strategy to tackle crime and disorder in their area in consultation with other relevant stakeholders. In Norway, the Police Act instructs the police to co-operate with other agencies to prevent the development of crime while the police instructions list relevant stakeholders with whom the police should collaborate⁸.

The agreement of a plan of action based on specific objectives and efficient coordination systems are also important. An overall plan agreed by a number of agencies can be created in such a way that it does not prevent individual agencies to develop their own internal plans. However, efficient coordination becomes important so as to ensure that actions are happening in a complimentary way.

In Oslo (Norway), in response to a growing open drug scene, a committee involving several ministries was established to develop a plan of action^{9,10}. In Frankfurt (Germany), in response to a long-standing open drug scene, the Lord Mayor established a weekly coordination meeting called the 'Monday Round', which brings together the police and the heads of the municipal offices for public order, public health and social affairs¹¹. The 'Monday Round' has existed since the late 1980's. Another meeting process, the 'Friday Round' has been in existence since the early 1990's. The 'Friday Round' is a coordination group established at the operational or street level. In Vienna (Austria), partnership coordination structures also operate at dual levels, including both the political level and the street level. Cooperation between the police and social services is organised by the drug coordinator of the city who operates under the order of the mayor. Regular meetings between police and social services, representatives of the city traffic authorities and outreach workers also occur^{3,12}.

In Dublin (Ireland), regular meetings between partners take place at local street level^{13,14,15,16}. Any problems which cannot be resolved at this level, where meetings are attended by junior agency staff, are addressed at larger regular meetings attended by senior agency personnel and public representatives. In Zurich (Switzerland), daily meetings are held between police and social services on the street¹⁷. In Sweden, weekly meetings between outreach workers and community police officers are held to monitor drug users either in treatment or who may be directed into treatment¹⁸.

Communication between agencies and local residents is also an important aspect of partnership working, in terms of building up trust, facilitating local resident participation in developing responses and also as a way of encouraging local community support for the establishment of drug services.

In Paris, a team 'Coordination 18' has been established to in order to ensure social mediation between those affected by drug-related nuisance (e.g., drug users, local residents, shopkeepers) and the police⁴. Such initiatives in France also aim to provide information to local residents about harm reduction initiatives so as to render them acceptable to the public. In Dublin, a comprehensive process of public meetings attended by local residents, police and local council officials provide an opportunity for local residents to raise issues of local concern in relation to drug use and related problems¹⁴. These meetings also provide an opportunity for the agencies to report back to the community about ongoing activities^{15,16}.

In Luxembourg, the provision of timely and reliable information to local residents about the establishment of a night shelter for drug users was seen as an important factor in ensuring its success⁴. In Zurich, to address local concerns about drug consumption rooms, regular meetings are organised between residents in the vicinity of the consumption rooms and police and social services¹⁷.

Partnerships to be effective in terms of addressing the multi-faceted nature of the problems faced require adequate resources^{11,14}. Regular meetings can also help in this respect by ensuring the smooth running of the partnership scheme and to identify resource gaps should they arise or any other problems^{18,19}. The provision of a meeting place, or office, at street or 'front-line' level, has also been found to assist in communication and coordination^{14,19}.

However, outreach work is also important. In France, mobile teams have been established to provide services to marginalized drug users⁴.

The partners involved will depend on the nature of the problem and the response adopted. Principal partners include the police, social and health care services and local community representatives. Partners can also include public representatives, other criminal justice agencies such as the courts and probation services, pharmacists⁵, transport companies where drug scenes develop near railway stations for example²¹, youth services and religious groups²². The media can also be an important partner and a well thought out media strategy can enhance the success of partnership activities⁶. It is also increasingly being recognised that drug users themselves have an important role to play in informing and implementing partnership responses. The establishment of structures to facilitate this input has occurred in some situations²⁰.

Responding in partnership

The need for accurate and up-to-date data on the nature of the problem and the needs of individual drug users and available support services is a crucial component of partnership approaches in terms of informing and implementing agreed action plans. In relation to information exchange, issues of police operational secrecy and client confidentiality arise. However, some partnership processes have developed effective ways of exchanging such data^{7,19}.

In Sweden, a pilot study was conducted to analyse the nature of the drug market and, based on the findings of the study, a steering group of relevant stakeholders drew up an action plan¹⁸. A further survey of participants in an open drug market was also planned so as to identify gaps in knowledge. In order to compile reliable data on individual drug users, in Amsterdam, a committee involving the health service, mental health care institutions, the police, public prosecutor, probation officer and representatives of the city council, was formed so as to prepare a personal file of every known drug user²⁷. A similar approach was taken in Utrecht in relation to repeat offenders¹⁹.

Many of the responses initiated by partnerships involve a combination of law enforcement and harm reduction measures. These measures can be introduced on a legal basis or in a less formal manner. Also, the specific approaches adopted do not always have as their primary objective the complete removal of the 'open drug scene'. While there appears to be agreement in all countries that very large drug scenes must not be permitted to develop, in many countries there is a 'conditional tolerance' of small, more manageable 'open drug scenes'^{3,23,24,30}. There are a number of reasons why such toleration might exist:

- It can facilitate the provision of low threshold services rather than driving drug users underground
- It reflects an acceptance that drug users are citizens with rights to assemble in public spaces
- Drug use, as distinct from drug possession, is not illegal in many jurisdictions
- It can facilitate low level monitoring and control by the police.

In some examples, drug dealing between drug users might be tolerated although dealing by non-addicted persons is prosecuted³. Here the law is being applied leniently or adapted to situations where police discretion is practiced. However, among the main conditions which are applied in this context are that public nuisance is not tolerated, that the broader public must not be intimidated and that vulnerable people such as children must not be involved.

In other countries, a different approach is adopted because it is felt that allowing open drug scenes of whatever size can send out the message, particularly to young people, that drug

use is acceptable²⁵. However, even in such circumstances, partnership initiatives might seek to ensure the removal of the 'open drug scene' and the prevention of a new one through a pragmatic combination of repression, low threshold drug treatment and social support¹⁸.

In order to address 'open drug scenes' which become large and difficult to manage, or are associated with increasing levels of violence and crime, an initial focus is sometimes placed on strict law enforcement and an intensification of police action against suspected drug dealers and users^{3,23}. Emphasis is placed on the dispersion of the 'drug scene'. There may also be quick intervention where a drug scene develops close to a school¹².

Responses can also involve the introduction of civil or criminal legal powers to prevent public nuisance associated with 'open drug scenes'². Administrative measures such as fines can be used to prevent the gathering of drug users or court-enforced orders can direct drug users not to visit certain parts of a city or to enter a drug treatment programme^{3,21}. In the United Kingdom, Anti-Social Behaviour Orders provide the police with civil powers to prohibit undesirable behaviour such as drug-related nuisance²⁶. Other legal initiatives include measures taken to prevent the development of drug use in local properties such as 'crack' houses. In the United Kingdom, following initiatives in the United States and Netherlands²⁷, a new law was introduced so that properties could be closed within 48 hours, for 3-6 month periods until the problem was resolved⁵. In Dublin, legal powers were introduced to allow for the eviction from local authority housing of residents involved in anti-social behaviour including drug dealing^{2,15}. In Netherlands legal measure have been introduced which give power to judges to impose more severe prison sentences for repeat offenders. This scheme, described as 'tough but socially conscious' also makes the municipality responsible for providing post-detention facilities for such individuals^{19,27}.

To address 'drug tourism', whereby drug users from outside the locality begin to congregate, efforts are made to encourage such users to return to their own localities, either through voluntary inducements, arrest and diversion to drug treatment in their own areas or physical transportation to their home communities^{3,20}.

In order to prevent a new 'open drug scene' from developing situational crime prevention measures can be introduced. These seek to design and manage the street or area so that it does not facilitate the emergence of a 'drug scene'^{3,7,22,26}. Measures taken include the provision of street lighting or the cutting of hedges that obscure clandestine activity⁷. In Stockholm (Sweden), the renovation of the central underground train station was seen as an important element in discouraging a drug market¹⁸.

Alongside law enforcement efforts directed at reducing or removing the 'open drug scene', most partnership approaches also introduce harm reduction initiatives and other low threshold treatment or support services. In Heerlem (Netherlands), the first phase of the response to an 'open drug scene' involved the building up of treatment and other care facilities so that sufficient support services were in place for drug users prior to action being taken against the 'open drug scene'²⁸.

Local partnerships are leading action on needle collection and public education about risk. Assistance can also involve the provision of food, clothing, laundry services, sleeping and housing services for homeless drug users, medical services including dental care, financial support including assistance with debt repayments, and employment assistance^{3,5,7,11,18,27}. An initiative developed in Netherlands for opiate users engaged in prostitution includes the provision of a safer working environment including the provision of showers, contraceptives, clean needles and regular medical check-ups and advice if requested²⁷. In Luxembourg, a night shelter for drug users was created near the railway station where an open drug scene had developed⁴.

The establishment of drug consumption rooms, also referred to as health rooms, has also occurred in some countries as a way of addressing problems associated with open drug scenes^{2,3,4,11,20}. While such initiatives have proven controversial, they have had some success in addressing issues of public nuisance associated with 'open drug scenes'.

Measuring outcomes

Process and outcome evaluations have an important role to play in partnership initiatives. A key principle of the United Kingdom drug intervention policy is that improvements must be measurable⁵. In the United Kingdom an annual Tackling Drug Supply Conference and Award ceremony provides an opportunity for participants to explore award-winning initiatives and thereby promotes the exchange of information about good practice in partnership working⁶. In Sweden, three different aspects of the partnership scheme were to be subject to evaluation: the extent of the drug problem in the areas concerned, the scheme's effects on the clients' situation and the 'collaborative climate' at the agencies involved¹⁸. Indicators of success also include assessments of whether the particular initiative had an impact on levels of crime and nuisance²⁸. Also, the number of meetings and stakeholder attendance rates are important indicators of progress^{13,28}.

Interviews with operational partners have shown that partnership working has enhanced mutual understanding and thereby improved inter-agency relations^{11,13,18}. In Dublin, an evaluation of a partnership scheme which included a survey of local residents, revealed a significant increase in local perception of an improvement in service provision arising as a result of the scheme^{13,14}. In Amsterdam, in response to measures to improve drug-related problems in the central railway station, a survey of visitors and travellers to the station was conducted²¹. A majority responded that they regarded the station as a safe place and also cleaner than the previous year. There was also a drop in recorded crimes such as robbery, threats and pick pocketing. In Dublin, an in-built monitoring system facilitated ongoing evaluation of progress in relation to specific local drug-related incidents of crime and anti-social behaviour¹³.

The success of partnership working has also been found to be dependent on the resources invested^{11,23}. Also, success can sometimes be dependent on the personal commitment and status within their organisations of the individuals involved¹¹. Overcoming local residents' concerns in relation to planned responses is also important. For example, the creation of open drug scenes around drug consumption rooms in some cities have led to complaints from local residents, and similar difficulties have been encountered following attempts to establish low-threshold services for drug users^{4,17}. In Zurich, to address such problems, committee members visit the drug consumption centres on a daily basis to ensure that people do not gather around the centre and to address related nuisance problems and to collect drug-related litter¹⁷. The role of the media can also be problematic on occasion, as reports written about particular initiatives can cause public confusion and fear¹⁸. Some partnership approaches have sought to work with the media to overcome such problems⁷.

A further problem is that responses need to be sustainable. Each component of the response must be complementary. In the north west of England, a series of police drug raids in a specific housing estate was followed by a series of pre-planned follow-up operations⁷. This included the provision of care to children whose parents may have been arrested in the raids, visits by social workers to vulnerable children, the holding of a public meeting after the raid accompanied by a police leaflet to explain why the raid had occurred and the leafleting of the area by voluntary drug treatment providers to advertise their services. Also, on the morning of the raid there was no refuse collection so that police vans would not be hindered by refuse collection vehicles. An overall objective of the operation was that it could serve as a catalyst for the rejuvenation of an area which had become run-down. Houses damaged in the raid were quickly repaired and funding was made available for regeneration purposes.

Partnership principles

Although the specific aims and objectives of partnership approaches reflect the specificity of the problem being confronted in a particular time and place, a number of general principles underlying the various approaches can be identified. These might include the following:

- Public space is public property. Everybody should behave in a way which is compatible with the needs of other users of the same place.
- What we define as nuisance is a reflection of what we are prepared to tolerate.
- Large 'open drug scenes' are particularly damaging and require intervention of some sort, both for the sake of the community and the safety and health of users.
- There is a need to identify, understand and deeply analyse the problem. The issue becomes primarily about addressing and fixing the problem, not just reacting to a crime.
- Action should be focused on places where crime, deprivation and social exclusion through drugs are most acute, on things that people clearly see.
- Engaging the local community is crucial in tackling local street markets
- There is a need for strategic planning and for agencies to work across disciplines and in partnership in designing responses. No one agency has total responsibility.
- Interventions, in accordance with the circumstances of the problem, must be balanced and should include a combination of law enforcement, social and health services, and environmental action.
- Police must accept and support treatment while social services and voluntary organisations must accept and support the need to diminish public nuisance
- There is a need to provide adequate, and in some cases substantial and long term resources, from all types of services, whatever intervention is taken. Drug treatment must be easily accessible.
- Interventions must be evaluated and improvements must be measurable
- Objectives must be realistic and attainable
- Responses should not further alienate drug users. Focus should be on lessening harms, both to users and society.

Guidelines of good practice

In putting the above principles into practice, based on the presentations made to the Criminal Justice Platform, a number of good practice guidelines can be identified.

Problem analysis and planning

- There should be a shared understanding of the problem and agreement on the aims and objectives of the response.
- There needs to be clarity as to how a problem is prioritised and defined and by whom.
- There is a need for accurate and up-to-date data to help explain the problem.
- There is a need for joint strategic planning and for agencies to work across disciplines and in partnership in designing responses.
- Responses should be sustainable in the long term and not just displace the problem elsewhere.
- At planning stage, preparation should consider all possible outcomes from law enforcement and other interventions. For example, spin off effects of arrests for users, other family members.
- Back-up services must be made available prior to intervention.

- Response can be selective and focus on a specific area or group.
- Responses should be monitored and evaluation of effectiveness should be built into any programme of action.

Structure and coordination

- Specific legislation establishing partnership structures can assist in creating a good climate for partnership development.
- Partnership structures should seek to include all relevant stakeholders.
- Partners should seek to create non-hierarchical structures to facilitate parity of esteem.
- All partners, whether they are from agencies or local communities, should have equal status in decision-making.
- Levels of representation from agencies on partnership committees should ensure that personnel have appropriate seniority for effective decision-making powers at the level at which the partnership meets.
- Cooperation must take place between police and social services at all levels, including the local or street level.
- Effective coordination structures or processes must be established.

Communications

- Good internal and external communication is a basic requirement for the success of the project.
- There needs to be efficient communication within each agency and also between agencies.
- There is a need to engage with media in a pro-active way.
- Communication systems must be able to address fears which can arise in communities in relation to possible reprisals from drug dealers as a consequence of partnership collaboration.
- Public meetings can be used to keep the community informed and to overcome communication problems.
- The publication of leaflets can be used to communicate information.
- Communications must address issues of confidentiality and individual data protection.
- The establishment of front-line offices can enhance communication between stakeholders.
- Regular meetings are necessary to respond to the ever-changing nature of the problem.

Trust and conflict

- There is a need to overcome issues of distrust.
- Partners should be open to change and to criticism.
- Issues arising from ethnic diversity and cultural differences which might arise in relation to drug use must be addressed.
- There is a need to address issues of abuse of power as this can significantly undermine progress (e.g. police harassment of community members).
- There is a need to avoid agency protectionism and rivalry.
- Regular attendance at meetings is important so as to build up trust and respect.
- Mechanisms of conflict management need to be established.
- Intended change by one partner must be discussed with other partners.
- Partners must respect each other's limitations.

Training and education

- Training in partnership working should occur within agencies.
- Training should bring partners together and enhance mutual understanding of roles, functions and limitations of different partners.
- Training can occur individually or jointly.
- Training programmes must address issues arising regarding ethnic diversity.
- Learning can also develop through partnership activity and working.

Recruitment and status of partnership

- Recruitment policies should identify suitable candidates for partnership working.
- The status of partnership approaches should be recognised within agencies through, for example, employee rewards, benefits and flexible working arrangements so as to facilitate meeting attendance etc
- Senior managers should take ownership of partnership initiatives so as to provide leadership and authority.
- Partners must give project implementation top priority within their organisations.

Conclusion – building on experience

Developments in partnership working such as those described above represent movement away from ideological confrontation at an abstract level towards pragmatic cooperation at the local or 'front line'. The partnership structures described through the hearings of the Criminal Justice Platform are at various stages of development. Although significant progress can be identified, the process of partnership working raises continuous challenges. Some issues and questions which might be worthy of further consideration include the following:

- What is the most appropriate form of training for partnership working?
- What is the appropriate balance between the rights of individuals and communities? Do the rights of the broader community always come before those of the few who break laws and social norms?
- Whether and under what circumstances should information about drug users be shared between law enforcement and support agencies?
- What is the most appropriate way to respond to drug users with psychiatric problems whose behaviour is causing public nuisance?
- Whether and under what circumstances might 'zones of tolerance' of drug use be created?
- Can the removal of 'open drug scenes' only occur within a framework of harm reduction?
- The drug user must be recognised as a citizen with individual rights to be respected. However, the user must respect the need to comply with the needs of others. How can an accommodation of rights be achieved?
- What implications do harm reduction policies such as drug consumption rooms have for law enforcement and the exercise of police discretion?
- Each organisation has its own culture, hierarchy, structure and identity. How can these be reconciled in a partnership context?
- How do we determine the effectiveness of partnership?

These are just some of the many issues which could be addressed in future meetings of the Expert Forum on Criminal Justice. Partnership working is and should be a continuous learning process. Having said that, the experience gained to date, as represented by the

many presentations to the Expert Forum, provides a valuable information base upon which to address such challenges in the future. As Burgess points out, 'not all types of approaches found in various countries are applicable to the different social, demographic, cultural and legal situations of the countries' represented at the Criminal Justice Platform²⁹. Nevertheless, given the similarities in the problems faced and the wealth of practical knowledge and experience which has been gained in many countries, there is a need to identify what works and what is transferable. Many lessons can be learned from the responses which have been tried and tested. These lessons have relevance for all societies as they seek to address a problem which is local in its impact but global in its reach.

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7. Calvert M *Sharing the vision – best practice in cooperative responses to local drug problems in the United Kingdom*.
8. Borstad E *Problem-oriented police work, Norway*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005.
9. Holand T *Intervention measures with regard to open drug scenes in Oslo*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
10. Fossum K *From good intentions to collaboration – what does it take?* Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
11. Weimar J *The drug policy in the city of Frankfurt, Germany*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005 and *Project 'OSSIP' – Proactive social work, security and prevention*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005.
12. David A *Co-operation between the law enforcement systems and social services regarding open drug scenes in Vienna, Austria*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
13. Connolly J *Drugs, crime and community policing in Dublin, Ireland*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.

14. Metcalfe M *Coordinators perspective on the policing forum in north east inner city Dublin, Ireland*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005
15. Barron D *Local housing authority perspective on the policing forum in north east inner city Dublin, Ireland*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005
16. Keane A *Police perspective on the policing forum in north east inner city Dublin, Ireland*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005.
17. Feller A *Forms of collaboration to prevent open drug scenes in the city of Zurich, Switzerland*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
18. Holman S *Joint action plan to curtail open drug markets in Stockholm, Sweden 2005-2007*.
19. Jongeneel E *Tough but socially conscious: Utrecht's policy on repeat offenders, Netherlands*. Presentation to the 4th meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 20th and 21st October 2005.
20. Fauske A *Partnership between the law enforcement systems and the social services in Oslo, Norway*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
21. Van der Meer C *Two examples of the Amsterdam approach to address public nuisance features of open drug scenes*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
22. Ahven A *Partnership between law enforcement and social services in Tallinn, Estonia*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
23. Herzig M *How to prevent an open drug scene. The Zurich experience*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
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25. Berzi G *Street level drug distribution development and measures taken by the Czech Republic police*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
26. Walker I *Description of the open drugs scene in Kings Cross, London*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
27. Woudstra F *To deal or not deal with drug nuisance on a local level*. Presentation to the 1st meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 29th and 30th April 2004.
28. Kraalij R *'Operation heartbeat' in Heerlen, Netherlands*. Presentation to the 3rd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 21st and 22nd April 2005.
29. Burgess R *Moderators report: conclusions and recommendations for successful responses*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.
30. Rasmussen D and Sorensen S *Measures implemented with regard to Christiania, Denmark*. Presentation to the 2nd meeting of the Pompidou Group Expert Forum on Criminal Justice, Strasbourg 18th and 19th November 2004.